Passive verbs







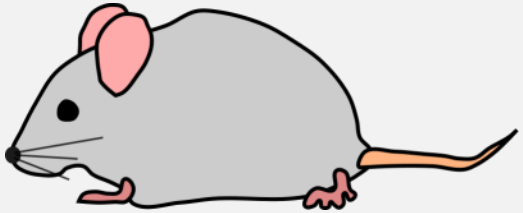


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Active and passive sentences

When a sentence is written in the **active voice**, the **subject** of the sentence is the performer (the 'doer') of an action:



Cats chase mice

subject | action (verb) | object

The **object** of the sentence is the 'receiver' of the action.

Here, the focus of the sentence is the cats.

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Active and passive sentences

When a sentence is written in the **passive voice**, the **receiver** of the action becomes the subject.

Mice are chased by cats

subject | action (verb) | object



The **performer** (the 'doer') of the action becomes the object.

Here, the focus of the sentence is the mice.

Move on

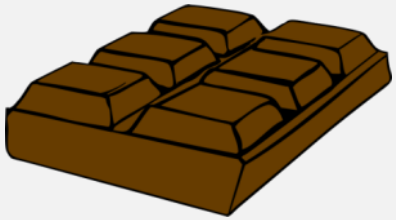
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Active or passive?

To tell whether the sentence is active or passive, think:

- Is the performer (‘doer’) or the receiver the focus of the sentence?
- If the performer is the focus, the sentence is active.
- If the receiver is the focus, the sentence is passive!

1. Penguins eat fish.
2. Caterpillars are eaten by birds.
3. John Lennon was killed by Mark Chapman.
4. I love chocolate.
5. Somebody has stolen my KitKat!
6. The blind man was being helped by the guide dog.



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Answers

1. *Penguins eat fish.*
2. *Caterpillars are eaten by birds.*
3. *John Lennon was killed by Mark Chapman.*
4. *I love chocolate.*
5. *Somebody has stolen my KitKat!*
6. *The blind man was being helped by the guide dog.*

1. Performer ('doer'): **active**
2. Receiver: **passive**
3. Receiver: **passive**
4. Performer ('doer'): **active**
5. Performer ('doer'): **active**
6. Receiver: **passive**



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Passive verb forms

To make a passive verb we need a form of the verb ‘to be’ and the past participle of the main verb.

Harold was defeated by the Normans.

past tense of the verb ‘to be’

past participle of the main verb ‘to defeat’



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Tenses of the verb ‘to be’

- Passive sentences can be made in any tense.
- The tense of the verb ‘to be’ determines the tense of the sentence.



Examples:

1. **The music** **is** played **by the DJ**. (present)
2. **The music** **was** played **by the DJ**. (past)
3. **The music** **will be** played **by the DJ**. (future)

Notice that for every tense, the main verb is always ‘played’ – the past participle of ‘to play’.

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Underline the passive verbs

Remember – the passive verb is formed by the verb form of ‘to be’ AND the past participle of the main verb.

- The suspect was caught by the police.
- You are lost in the jungle.
- The cars are being tested for safety.
- We have been captured by the enemy.
- He will be substituted at half time.
- They were being left alone by the bully.



Now create your own passive sentences.

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Answers

- The suspect was caught by the police.
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Masking responsibility with the passive voice

Sometimes, the passive voice is used to hide or 'mask' who or what is responsible for an action.



We can use this:

- When we want to avoid blame for an action.
- When it is not important to know who has performed the action (for example, when writing the method of a science experiment).

Passive	**Passive (masked)**
The window was broken by me.	The window was broken.
The solution was heated to 130^0c by the scientist.	The solution was heated to 130^0c.
Mistakes were made by us in calculating your tax.	Mistakes were made in calculating your tax.
Passengers are reminded by the driver to wear seatbelts.	Passengers are reminded to wear seatbelts.

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